

# Office of Attorney General Terry Goddard



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Terry Goddard Announces Settlement of Job Discrimination Lawsuit**

(Phoenix, Ariz. – Feb. 13, 2008) Attorney General Terry Goddard today announced a settlement resolving an employment discrimination lawsuit against Tucson Residence Foundation, Inc. (TRF). The lawsuit alleged that TRF discriminated against Lisa Parra, 38, of Tucson, who is deaf, by withdrawing a promotion the company had offered her because of preferences expressed by two customers.

The lawsuit alleged that TRF hired Parra in 2005 as a mentor for developmentally-disabled residents. In this position, she provided direct care and supervision. After satisfactorily performing the mentor job for two months, Parra applied for a supervisor position that would oversee the operations and staff of two residences serving four residents.

According to court documents, two guardians of residents objected to a deaf person supervising the residential program, and TRF subsequently withdrew the promotion offer. Parra requested the promotion be reinstated. After her request was denied by TRF Executive Director Russ Schlichting, Parra filed a complaint with the Attorney General's Civil Rights Division.

It is a violation of the law for an employer to deny an employment opportunity because of discriminatory customer preferences, regardless of whether those preferences are based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, or age discrimination.

After an investigation completed by the Civil Rights Compliance Section, the Attorney General's Office filed a lawsuit in February 2007 against TRF. Parra entered into a separate confidential settlement agreement to resolve her claim for monetary damages against TRF.

The settlement does not constitute an admission of wrongdoing. It requires TRF to:

- Create a policy that recognizes that while consumer input about staffing will be considered, employment opportunities will not be denied based on discriminatory preferences.
- Create a written procedure for lawfully and fairly evaluating whether applicants or employees with disabilities can perform job duties affected by their disability, using objective information such as prior work experience, work record and opinions of health care or disability professionals.
- Train TRF's management about the new procedures and policies.

- Meet with all TRF employees to explain the new policies.
- Provide a sign language interpreter at the employee meetings for TRF's deaf employees.
- Strengthen its existing EEO policies.
- Pay the State \$1,000 to monitor compliance with the Consent Decree and enforce civil rights laws.

The settlement was approved Monday by Pima County Superior Court Judge Deborah Bernini. Assistant Attorney General Rose Daly-Rooney handled this case.

The Attorney General's Office enforces the Arizona Civil Rights Act, which prohibits employment discrimination based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age or the results of genetic testing. If you believe you are a victim of employment discrimination or harassment, contact the Civil Rights Division of the Attorney General's Office to file a charge of discrimination at 602-542-5263 in Phoenix or 520-628-6500 in Tucson. You may also visit one of more than 36 satellite offices or file a complaint online. To more information about filing a complaint online or satellite offices, please visit [www.azag.gov](http://www.azag.gov).

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